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Volume 1, Issue 3
April / May 2008

ORLANDO

Attractions

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Opening Day at

Aquatica

SeaWorld's New Water Park

**Spaceship Earth
Evolves at Epcot**

**Blue Man Group
One Year Later**

**Sahara Sleeping
at Disney's
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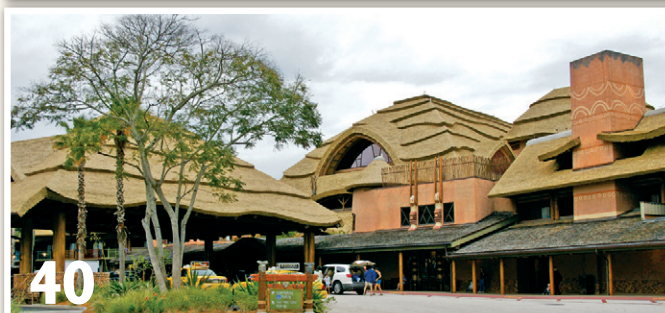
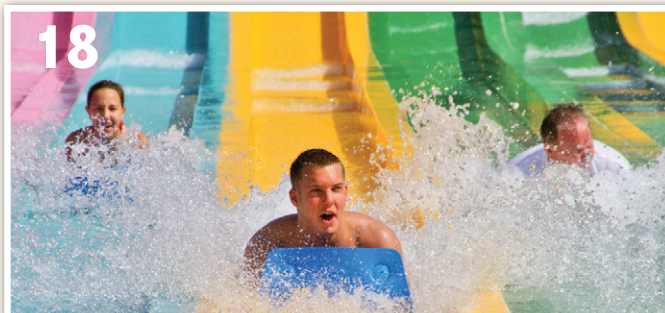


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Letters



Fun in the Sun

Summertime is approaching fast, so we thought it'd be appropriate to pack this issue with everything you need to know to survive the hot Florida sun this year. From a new water park to some of the best pools in town, we've got you covered. Just remember, even if you're in the water all day, be it at a water park, swimming pool, or just riding your favorite drenching theme park attraction, the sun still finds its way to you, so bring and wear plenty of sunscreen and duck into some air conditioned shops whenever possible. We've seen too many guests turn into lobsters.

Ricky & Matt

Ricky Brigante and Matt Roseboom
Publishers and Orlando Fans

and I both work in the public school system. I contacted a local travel agent to see if there was something similar for Disney-owned hotels (and packages) – no.

With all that educators, military and public safety crews do for our country, I feel it's a shame they don't get some help from Disney when these people do have a few days to take a vacation. Most educators only have the summer and perhaps a few days over winter and spring break to take a few days off – all of which are at peak rates.

A suggestion to Disney: Allow educators, military and public safety employees, and other such people to book their packages at the value rate, even at peak times (or at least at some kind of discounted rate). It would be a great way to say thanks to these people who give of themselves every day to make our world a little better place.

Chuck Lionberger
Roanoke, Va.

BEARLY LOVE



You are never too old for love.

Michael Bishop
Jamaica, N.Y.

A few words say a lot, Michael. Thanks for sharing.

LOVE THE MAGAZINE

I originally wrote to you saying my magazine never arrived. It seems one of my roommates intercepted it and was keeping it for herself to read first. My other roommate found out and told me when I got home from work just now. Needless to say it was confiscated and she was severely scolded (okay, I yelled at her and threatened to never let her read any of the other issues when they came).

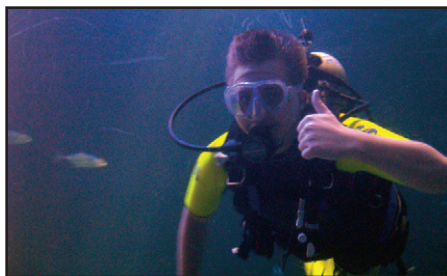
So I guess you could take that as a compliment; she apparently thought it was too good to share. She never takes the bills or the catalogs, just the really good magazine. But she's a good cook and always pays on time, so I usually forgive her.

Terry Mort
Billings, Mont.

NO DISNEY DISCOUNT

I was planning our next trip to Walt Disney World (our second) when I noticed the Swan and Dolphin hotels offering significant discounts on room-only rates for special groups including educators, military and public safety (police/fire/rescue) personnel. Great, I thought. My wife

DISNEY DIVING



Recently I went to Walt Disney World, where I participated in the DiveQuest Tour at Epcot. This was an amazing experience! I got a chance to be the star attraction and feel like a cast member with all the patrons excitedly watching me! What made it even better was interacting with my family and friends just on the other side of the glass and the people dining in the restaurant. I will most definitely return to do this again. This is the only place in the world where you can go and be guaranteed to see that much sea life, even sharks! It was a dream come true and a magical experience.

Zach Stark
Casper, Wyo.

MORE PHOTO TIPS

I received my second issue of "Orlando Attractions Magazine" and I must say it's really excellent. Under my little letter (many thanks for publishing my panoramic image), you mentioned that you'd like people to submit tips and examples for taking pictures. Here are some more tips:

- Pictures of friends and family in the parks is a wonderful idea. Just remember where the sun is. Take a picture with the sun or strong light behind them and you'll end up with a silhouette worthy of the Liberty Square Portrait Gallery.

- Memory cards are very cheap these days and you can really get a lot of bang for your buck. Never delete a picture on the camera. Pictures can often look terrible on the camera view screen and end up being a fantastic gem when you see them on your computer.

- Want to capture Disney from your child's viewpoint? Then simply get to their height level. Not only will the pictures look wonderfully intimate, but later on, you'll find that they better reflect your child's memories.

- If you're picking a new camera, take

special care to choose one with a short auto-focus and image capture time. More often than not the best pictures are quite literally snapshots as they capture the fun of the moment far better than a staged "say cheese" picture.

• Want to take pictures on Splash Mountain without a costly accident, specialist camera or expensive protective case? Why not pop your camera into two "press and seal" freezer bags, which tend to be made of thicker plastic. Just don't go deep sea diving.

Rob Leather
Manchester, England

MEMORIES OF DAD



Here's a picture of my dad, brother Chuck, and me in the then Polynesian Village Bob-A-Round Boats back in the 1970s.

Most Web sites report the boats were taken out of commission either shortly after WDW opened or in 1975, however, this snapshot was taken in March 1977. The boats had speakers and were reportedly run on batteries. Web sites note this was the reason they were retired, as the batteries didn't stay charged. But I don't remember any of that; all I remember is

having a really good time.

My dad loved boats, but he loved the Bob-A-Rounds in particular, and was upset the year we came back and they were gone. Sadly, he passed away just a week ago (Jan. 2), and we'd planned to take him back to his beloved Polynesian last year, but he was so sick, we canceled the trip. In his honor, three friends and I are going to stay at the Polynesian for five days in May and do all the things he loved to do, and you can bet we're going to rent at least one boat while we're there, even though it most definitely won't be a Bob-A-Round!

Kristi Petersen Schoonover
Danbury, Conn.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY OR TOO LATE TO CELEBRATE



New Year's Eve fireworks at the Magic Kingdom. (Okay, so it's really the night before New Year's Eve but they're the New Years fireworks!)

Evan Henk
Punta Gorda, FL

There's nothing wrong with enjoying New Year's fireworks a day early, nor is there anything wrong with enjoying them several months later. Great photo.

PRAISE

I have been meaning to write you to tell you that the article that Julie Saunders wrote on the 25th Anniversary rededication ceremonies at Epcot was wonderfully written. I was very lucky to be there for the events and by reading her article it brought back all of the excitement as if it were only yesterday!

Thank you for finding such a superlative writer who can express herself so well in this wonderful article. I loved reading it!

Pam VanSyckle
Lake Hopatcong, N.J.

BEFORE AND AFTER



The first photo is of my brother and me in Liberty Square at the Magic Kingdom with Eeyore, Tigger & Pooh in December 1973. Of the two blonde boys, I am the shorter of the two and the one with the Mickey Mouse Pin button on his shirt. Eeyore had just tapped my brother on the head when this picture was taken. The second picture is of me visiting the Magic Kingdom 34 years later on Aug. 9, 2007. I still look the same as I did 34 years ago.

Frank Forrester
Tappahanock, Va.

REMEMBER WHEN...

This photo was taken in February 1974. It was my family's first trip to Disney World. I was walking near the carousel when Dale walked up from behind and put his arm around me. My parents snapped this photo and you can see how embarrassed I was. It's a fun memory of my first trip to Disney World. I think of that moment each time I see Chip or Dale in the park.

Jodi Rugg
Aurora, Ill.



MORE PRAISE

As I live in the UK, I only get to visit Orlando every two years, so you can imagine how delighted I was when your superb new publication appeared. I used to subscribe to the "Disney Magazine" and was absolutely

surprised and upset when it ceased publication.

I used to be a publicist for Walt Disney Productions in London back in the 1980s, so have had the opportunity to work on the "inside" so to speak. It was one of the happiest times of my life. During this period we used to do a lot more character appearances, stage shows, parades, tours and store openings, but sadly these have all disappeared now.

Your magazine now fills the void, I'm pleased to say. The layout and design are excellent, and you certainly fill it to capacity with wonderful features and photo spreads. It's bright, colourful and extremely tempting. I've finally got something to look forward to throughout the year, as well as planning my next visit to the Magic Kingdom.

Keep up the good work, and I can't wait until issue three drops on my door mat.

Brian Burton
Borehamwood, Hertfordshire, England

I am a twice-a-year visitor to Walt Disney World and a subscriber to your magazine and I love it! I especially love your Work In Progress section. Even though I peruse every Disney Web site available, I am still old school enough that I like to hold a magazine in my hand and read it wherever I choose. I was devastated when the "Disney Magazine" shut down and now your magazine is like someone throwing a drowning person a lifeline! Keep up the good work!

Mary Jo Salerno
Laureldale, Pa.

I just wanted to drop a note to tell you that a friend had recently subscribed to your magazine and I got a chance to look through them this past week. I was very impressed. My family and I are huge Disney fans and make at least one trip a year to Walt Disney World. I was very impressed with the articles on Disney, especially the stories on Epcot (first issue) and Disney's Hollywood Studios

(second issue). I especially enjoyed the interview with the Tower of Terror cast member. Outstanding article! Now your magazine has us interested in visiting other parks besides Walt Disney World.

Long story made short, I enjoyed the Disney articles so much, I subscribed this morning and even ordered the back issues. I look forward to the next issue.

Tim Spicer
Friendsville, Tenn.

Great magazine! I can't wait for the next issue! One question, which could perhaps turn into a feature. The photos you have on the Web site of fireworks and the castle in the Magic Kingdom are amazing! How do you get such great results with all in focus and the castle so visible? I only have a digital point and shoot camera, and when I try to take photos of fireworks, I can never see the castle in them. It would be great to know how people achieve such great results, and if it's possible for average cameras to get the same or near those results. Carry on the good work!

Debbie Barker
Cambridge, England

Thanks for all the kind words. We really appreciate all of the great congratulation letters we've been getting.

As for the fireworks pictures, they were taken with a digital SLR camera. But we've seen some pocket cameras get some great results also. Try turning your flash off and use a tripod if possible. If you don't have a tripod, hold as still as you can or set the camera on a trash can, fence or post if possible.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Thanks to a few readers who pointed out some errors in our Feb./ March 2008 issue.

- In the Major Attractions Timeline for Disney's Hollywood Studios, we mistakenly put the date for the opening of Fantasmic at Disneyland in California. The Florida version first opened in 1998.

- In that same timeline we incorrectly listed the opening date for Playhouse Disney – Live on Stage. The correct year is 2001.

- We received a call from Steven Schussler of Schussler Creative concerning some inaccuracies in our Yak & Yeti Restaurant Report. Mr. Schussler wanted to clarify that his company shared their pan Asian concept, Yak & Yeti, with Disney for many months before bringing Landry's in as a partner and operator.

He also clarified that Disney never collaborated with Landry's on the Rainforest concept and Landry's wasn't involved with the Rainforest Café until they purchased it in 2000.

He also wanted to let everyone know the Asian artifacts at the Yak & Yeti are not replicas. They are all authentic.

- We apologize for misspelling Imagineer Joe Rohde's last name in the Yak & Yeti article. Sorry, Joe.

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Vacation Planner



APRIL



1 Mickey's Pirate and Princess Party at the Magic Kingdom. 7 p.m. to midnight. Also on April 4, 6, 11, 16, 23; May 2, 9, 16, 21, 26, 31; June 4.

1-3 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Ricky Nelson Remembered featuring The Nelsons. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

3 Busch Gardens Real Music Series presents Charo. Runs through April 6.

3-4 Nature Quest Wildlife Days at Silver Springs.

Dozens of eco-related vendors will participate with booths, displays and interactive exhibits.

4-5 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Jay Black. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.



5 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios featuring Huey Lewis & the News in concert.

6-9 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Herman's Hermits starring Peter Noone. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

10-13 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Grass Roots featuring Rob Grill. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

12 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios featuring LL Cool J in concert.

14-16 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Happenings. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

17-18 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Peter & Gordon. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

18 Harbor Nights Wine Tasting & Jazz at Universal's Portofino Bay Hotel.

19 Mardi Gras at Universal Studios featuring

ing Earth, Wind & Fire in concert.

19 Viva La Musica at SeaWorld presents Elvis Crespo.



19-23 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Starship starring Mickey Thomas. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

20 Viva La Musica at Busch Gardens presents Andy Montañez.

24 Velvet Sessions rock n' roll cocktail party at the Hard Rock Hotel.

24-26 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Ventures. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

26 Viva La Musica at SeaWorld presents R.K.M. & Ken-Y.

27 Viva La Musica at Busch Gardens presents Oscar D'Leon.

27-30 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents BJ Thomas. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

MAY

1-3 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Arlo Guthrie. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

3 Viva La Musica at SeaWorld presents Luis Fonsi.

4 Viva La Musica at Busch Gardens presents Grupo Niche.

4-5 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Searchers. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

5 Astronaut Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Veteran Astronauts John Blaha, Robert Cabana, Bryan O'Connor and Loren Shriver will be inducted during a public ceremony at 3 p.m. at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

6-10 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Tokens. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

10 Viva La Musica at SeaWorld presents Gilberto Santa Rosa.

11 Viva La Musica at Busch Gardens presents Willie Colon.

11-15 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Davy Jones. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

16-17 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Jose Feliciano. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

17 Tusks: Mammoths & Mastodons at Silver Springs. See and learn about pre-historic American Mammoths and Columbian Mastodons. Continues through Sept. 7.

18-20 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Felix Cavallere's Rascals. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

21-24 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Gary Puckett. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

25-27 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents The Cowsills. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

28-June 1 Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival presents Tony Orlando. Three shows nightly at 5:45, 7 and 8:15 p.m.

29 Velvet Sessions rock n' roll cocktail party at the Hard Rock Hotel.

JUNE



6-8 Star Wars Weekends at Disney's Hollywood Studios. Continuing each Friday, Saturday and Sunday in June. Special guests to be announced.

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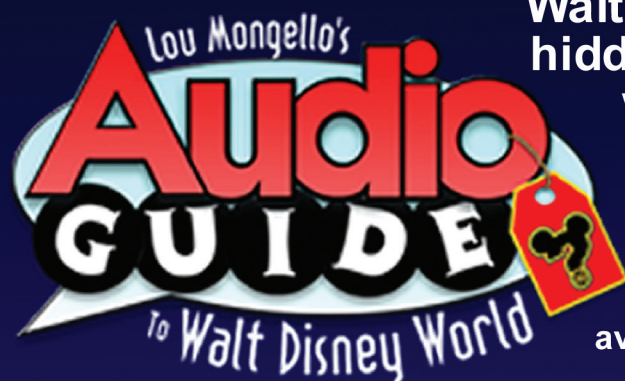
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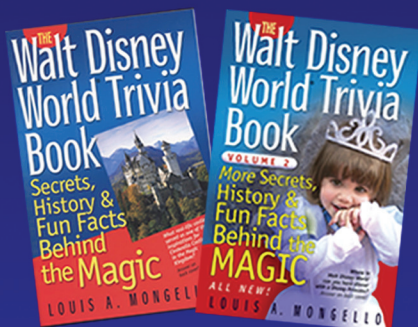
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Work in Progress ?

You're Goin' to Hollywood...

Studios! Beginning in late 2008, guests at Disney's Hollywood Studios will be able to take part in *American Idol*. The TV show-based attraction will be installed in the former ABC Theater (below). Participants will audition in a video kiosk and, if chosen, sing in front of a live audience. Each day's winner will receive a front-of-the-line pass to their next regional *American Idol* audition.

■ **STATUS:**
IN THE WORKS

LOCATION:
DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD
STUDIOS



Seeing without Sight

Visually impaired guests visiting Walt Disney World have recently gained the ability to "see" attraction visuals via a device providing them with descriptive narration. Currently only available for five attractions at Epcot, the neck-worn device plays audio descriptions via headphones within each attraction, allowing the listener to learn more about their surroundings than ever before.

■ **STATUS:**
IN THE WORKS
LOCATION: EPCOT



Dixie's Final Stampede

LOCATION: OFF OF I-4

One of Orlando's newest dinner shows, Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede, closed its doors after it was purchased by the parent company of the nearby Orlando Premium Outlets. Dixie Stampede is reportedly looking for a new Orlando location on which to rebuild and reopen.

■ **STATUS:**
CLOSED



More Edible Options

LOCATION:
DOWNTOWN DISNEY

Downtown Disney is currently full of ongoing restaurant changes. **T-Rex's walls are up** (pictured right), one step closer to its Fall 2008 opening.

■ **STATUS:**
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



Wolfgang Puck Express in the Marketplace is enclosing its outdoor seating. When the restaurant reopens, it will also feature an updated menu.

Mania Countdown

LOCATION:
DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Interior progress on Toy Story Mania has reached testing phases, with a tentative soft opening scheduled for mid-to-late April. We can expect major exterior changes in the near future, as Pixar Place gets closer to opening. Look for complete coverage in our next issue.

■ **STATUS:**
UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



Cruisin' to Krustyland

LOCATION: UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

The Simpsons Ride, as it is officially now called, was slated to open to guests just a few weeks after this printing. Head to attractionsmagazine.com to find out all the latest details about this highly anticipated attraction.

■ **STATUS:**
UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Dirt Means Progress

LOCATIONS:
SEAWORLD & ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE

Two of Orlando's biggest vacation destinations, SeaWorld and Islands of Adventure, are each sporting their own fresh dirt lot, primed for construction of something new. The dirt at Islands of Adventure (below) is a sign of progress on **The Wizarding World of Harry Potter**, which still has quite some time before its opening in late 2009. The **SeaWorld** dirt lot is a bit more of a mystery at the moment, with rumors pointing to a number of potential attractions, both big and small.



■ STATUS:
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

They begin to vocalize...

LOCATION: MAGIC KINGDOM

■ STATUS:
COMPLETE?



Even though **The Haunted Mansion** at the Magic Kingdom recently wrapped up a major refurbishment, changes are still taking place at this ghostly retreat. The latest improvement brings new life to the Mansion's graveyard (ironic, eh?) by way of improved singing busts that look more realistic than ever. Gone are the "glowing" faces in the photo above, taken before the improvement. Now the busts really look like singing stone.

Hollywood Gets An Earful

LOCATION: DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

■ STATUS:
IN THE WORKS

It took several weeks after the official renaming of Disney-MGM Studios to Disney's Hollywood Studios for the park's icon, the Earful Tower, to receive the park's new logo. Not all of the logos in the park have been updated just yet, but they're well on their way to being completed.



For more
"Work in Progress"
visit the

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On FIRE

The HOTTEST trend around.



Shoot It!

When it comes to interactivity, it doesn't get any hotter than video games. So what better way to draw crowds than to essentially make rides that *are* video games? Buzz Lightyear's Space Ranger Spin (above, left) started the craze with its 1998 opening at the Magic Kingdom, featuring large, animated, but flat targets to shoot at. Universal Orlando quickly brought in the Men in Black franchise allowing guests to zap animatronic aliens (not flat targets) along the way (above, center). Now, Disney is answering back with Toy Story Mania (above, right), replacing physical targets with more than 50 HD screens. Guests will wear 3D glasses, immersing themselves into the attraction, interacting with carnival-style games along the way, each hosted by Toy Story characters.



Text It!

Everyone's favorite one-eyed monster, Mike Wazowski, and his friends have taken to the stage in Tomorrowland's Monsters, Inc. Laugh Floor. Think you're funny? Interact with the show by texting your jokes and you might see your face plastered up on the giant theater screens. Feel free to make goofy faces.



Fly It!

This attraction puts a new spin on the popular "spin around in a circle while going up and down" ride. To avoid getting wet, you have to follow the directions given in the musical rhyme.



Dance It!

Disney has two parades that let you dance the day away. Block Party Bash (left) joins guests with Pixar characters in song and dance. Want to be the next Sharpay? The High School Musical 2: School's Out mini-parade will keep you boppin' to the top as you join in, showing your Wildcat spirit.

Think you know what's hot?

Send us your picks and pictures telling us about the latest theme park trends: trendtracker@attractionsmagazine.com



Swing It!

Interactivity meets Star Wars in the new Jedi Training Academy at Disney's Hollywood Studios. After cruisin' through the Death Star trenches at the nearby Star Tours attraction, park guests can fulfill the rest of their intergalactic fantasies, wielding a light saber against none other than Darth Vader himself.



Sing It!

Disney is taking singing along to your favorite attraction songs to a whole new level of interactivity with their upcoming American Idol attraction at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

cooled off

This one's all but melted.



Update It! Please!

DisneyQuest was to become a nationwide chain of quality arcades with virtual attractions. Instead, its sole Downtown Disney venue hasn't received a major update in years. In-park attractions seem to be taking over for what it was supposed to feature.

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Photo Finds

Orlando is always filled with fun things to see and our photographers are there to capture it all.

View our online gallery for more photos of these events.



Tinkerbell rides atop a treasure chest in the parade during **Disney's Pirate and Princess Party** at the Magic Kingdom. The parties include a special parade, fireworks show and spots to gather beads and gems.



Fireworks and Shamu ended an **announcement from Busch Entertainment** in late February. A new Aquatica, SeaWorld, Busch Gardens and Discovery Cove will be built in Dubai on a Shamu-shaped island by 2012. More information on page 49.



ESPN Cheerleaders lead the way for baseball's John Franco as he rides with Chip in a motorcade down Hollywood Boulevard during **ESPN The Weekend** at Disney's Hollywood Studios during the first weekend in March. Sports stars were on hand as ESPN shows were broadcast live. Kids and adults could also try their hand at many sports in an area set-up beside the Rock 'n' Roller Coaster.

The **Playhouse Disney** show at Hollywood Studios recently received a makeover adding character puppets from the new Disney Channel shows Handy Manny, Little Einsteins, My Friends Tigger and Pooh, and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse.

Two new exhibits recently opened in Innovations at Epcot. **Don't Waste It** (below) takes teams through various games teaching them about recycling and creating landfills to help the environment, and **What's Your Problem** (right) has audience members compete in challenges to learn how Velcro helps in our everyday lives.



An authentic New Orleans band performs while stilt walkers entertain the crowd at Universal Studios' annual **Mardi Gras celebration**. The party is held every Saturday from February through April. The festivities include a parade (with plenty of beads to be caught), food, music and a special big-name concert.



Tryouts to be on the second season of the hit NBC television show **American Gladiators** were held in early February at Universal CityWalk. Hundreds of men and women lined up to fill out an application, do some pull-ups and perform various timed conditioning tests. The second season of the show is scheduled to begin on May 19.

This **one-of-a-kind** themed **VW Touran** compact van can be seen at the base of the Incredible Hulk Coaster at Islands of Adventure. Fans of *The Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift* will recognize it as Twinkie's car from the film. The Hulk car was created as a joint project by Volkswagen designers and the production staff of the film and was donated by Volkswagen.



SeaWorld's New Water Park **Aquatica**

A Photo Tour of Opening Day

By Ricky Brigante

Photos By Matt Roseboom



When SeaWorld announced on March 5, 2007 that it would be building a water park, many wondered how it would fare in the business of putting humans in the water instead of animals. Just under one year later, on March 1, 2008, guests found out as Aquatica “soft” opened to the public. A steel drum band entertained a crowd of excited fans, lined up and waiting to be among the first to enter the new park.

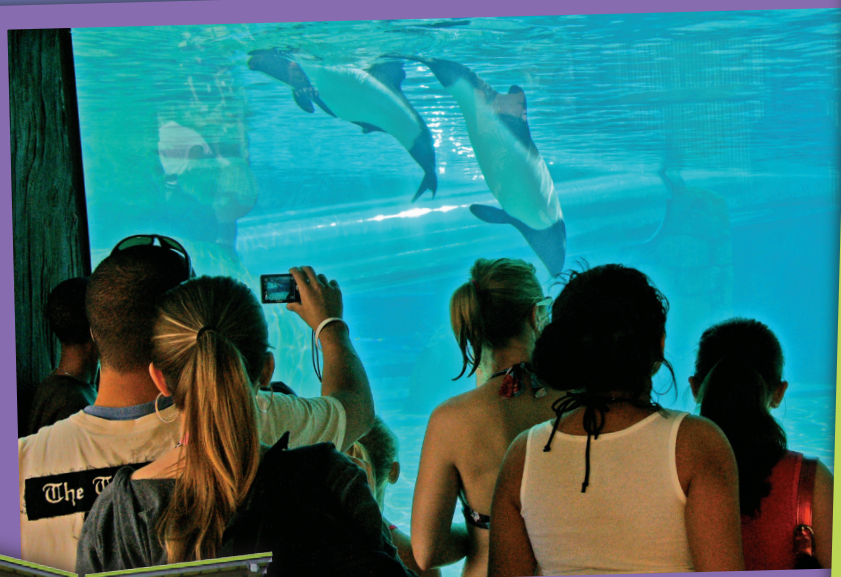




Aquatica's 80,000 square feet of white sandy beaches are full of life, surrounded by attractions and relaxation. The best view of the park's largest beach area can be seen from the top of the Whanau Way attraction (right) which sends four riders down 5-story slides in double inner tubes.

The beach at Aquatica also contains one very unique attraction, or rather, two unique attractions in one. They are Big Surf Shores and Cutback Cove, the world's only side-by-side wave pools (seen separated by a walkway on the left side of the picture below). Big Surf Shores keeps things calm with gently rolling surf while Cutback Cove (above, left) produces crashing waves with 5-foot swells.





Unique sights and thrills are found around every corner of Aquatica.

Taumata Racer (left) sends up to 8 riders simultaneously through enclosed twists and turns, ultimately pitting them against each other in a race to the bottom of the 300-foot slide.

One of the most talked-about attractions at Aquatica is the Dolphin Plunge (above, right) which sends riders down 250-foot-long clear tubes, right through a pool with black-and-white Commerson's dolphins, which greatly resemble SeaWorld's mascot, Shamu (definitely not a coincidence).

For those who simply wish to watch the unique dolphins in action, there's a dry, covered viewing area (above, left) in which guests can see both the aquatic mammals as well as fast-moving Dolphin Plunge riders. Just outside, guests can also watch the dolphins get cared for and fed (center).



There's something for everyone at SeaWorld's new water park. For those who aren't looking for a thrill, the Loggerhead Lane (top, right) allows guests to float down a lazy river at their own pace, enjoying the foliage and sealife along the way. Thrill seekers may want to try Roa's Rapids as an alternative, fast-paced version of Loggerhead Lane.

For younger guests, Aquatica has two kid's play areas: Walkabout Waters (above, left) and Kata's Kookaburra Cove. Hungry guests will find no shortage of food and drinks at Aquatica. Waterstone Grill (top, left) offers healthy sandwiches and salads, Mango Market serves grab-and-go lunch items, and Banana Beach Cook-Out offers all-you-can-eat burgers, hot dogs, and more. Comfort-seeking guests can rent private cabanas (above, right) for \$150-\$175 per day, allowing for the ultimate in water park privacy.

Aquatica features even more rides, attractions, and sights than we could fit in these four pages, so be sure to check out our Web site at www.attractionsmagazine.com for even more high-quality photos and video from SeaWorld's newest theme park.



Orlando's COOL POOLS

Hotel Pools Offer Fun Rest Stops In-Between Theme Park Visits

By Deborah Brauser

It's a common plea heard from visiting kids: "When can we go to the pool?" After a few action-packed days traipsing around theme parks and other attractions, many families look forward to spending at least one day (or more!) relaxing at their hotel pool.

And with many of the area's hotels and resorts now offering incredibly elaborate swimming pools, water slides and even mini-water parks, it's almost as though the hotels have become theme park destinations themselves. Here are some of the best.

Nickelodeon Family Suites by Holiday Inn

If a child could design their dream water park area, it might look a lot like the two pool areas at Nick Family Suites. The four-story interactive tower in the main lagoon area (right) has seven colorful waterslides and corkscrew flumes jutting out from all sides, while a 400-gallon dunk tank drenches guests throughout the day. Every afternoon, the tank dumps green gooey stuff as the crowd chants, "Slime! Slime! Slime!" The courtyard area also has a large zero-entry pool with interactive fountains, a pre-school water play area, two whirlpools, and a mini golf course. Nightly poolside activities at the lagoon include family competitions where the winners get slimed, and movies are shown on an inflatable screen.



A much calmer second pool complex is located on the other side of the hotel. It also has a zero-entry pool and an interactive water tower, but with smaller slides and a pre-school splash zone.

Ginn Reunion Resort

Known for its spectacular golf courses, Ginn's five-acre water park area is also making waves for its owners and guests. Located just six miles from Disney, the highlight of the resort's water park is a large, round, zero-entry pool with a two-story interactive water tower. Featuring a giant spilling bucket, several corkscrew water flumes, water cannons and forts, climbing nets, water curtains, and a rope bridge, this tower is extremely popular with kids. Adults seem to better appreciate the area's 1,000-foot lazy river as it winds along a lush, shady landscape and past waterfalls into a large pool, which also features a water slide. Live entertainment and other activities are presented poolside on the weekends.



Stormalong Bay at Disney's Yacht & Beach Club

This large water recreation area features a 750,000-gallon lagoon pool complete with a soft-on-the-feet sandy bottom. The pool has different depths and winds past a shallow children's area with a sandy beach area, two hot tubs, and a fast-moving, rather deep lazy river. (Note: unless you're a strong swimmer, make sure you rent a gondola before facing the lazy river's currents.) In addition, a life-sized shipwreck play area has a small children's water slide and a very large, 230-foot Flying Jib water slide. This is one thrilling ride as guests climb



a spiral staircase and then plunge through the straight, enclosed ship's jib before hitting the open corkscrew flume and then emerging into the lagoon pool.



Sheraton Safari

This hotel claims to have "the world's largest python water slide." And at 79 feet, that appears to be the case as this enclosed slide truly looks like a very large python twisting into the pool, complete with scaly skin, yellow eyes, and a big tongue. Barb Freda from Weston, Fla. says the slide is the reason they've stayed at the Safari three times now. "My daughter and all her friends just love that slide. It's long and dark, so it's a bit of an adventure for them." The slide also fits into the pool area's jungle safari theme, which also includes a thatched hut bar, a kid's pool with a water-spouting frog, and a hot tub.

Universal's Hard Rock Hotel



Is it really a surprise that the Hard Rock would be all about the music? With rock tunes playing above and below the water through their underwater stereo system, this hotel pool just has a different feel. Guests can relax like pampered rock stars while lying out on the white sand beach, taking a dip in the sandy bottom pool or one of the two hot tubs (one for adults only), and being catered to in one of the rock-themed cabana rentals. Or they can stage dive down the very fast 260-foot water slide. In fact, this slide is much quicker than it looks, says Sam Justice. "I liked how fast you went, especially when lying down. I just kept doing it over and over!" Poolside activities occur daily, with dive-in movies weekly.

Horizons by Marriott

arr! At this fun resort, it's all about pirates. The first pool area features two hot tubs and a kid-friendly pirate ship – complete with water cannons and two small slides. The star of the second pool is the two-story Pirate's Plunge water slide. At the large interactive water playground, kids can shoot water at each other from inside water forts, play among several interactive water fountains shaped like alligators, and get dunked by a giant water bucket.

In addition, recreation team members act as part of Captain Marriott's pirate crew as they coordinate kids' activities. During the warm seasons, this includes games of water tag and even following kids down the Pirate's Plunge – all while dressed in their pirate



costumes. Horizons Recreation Lead Associate Mike Secretan said he enjoys his role on the captain's crew because having fun is a job requirement. "We're not afraid to get soaked because it's all about making kids happy. Besides, everybody loves pirates!"



Disney's Port Orleans French Quarter

The first thing guests see at the resort's Doubloon Lagoon is the huge purple and turquoise sea serpent that takes up most of the pool, doing double duty as both a bridge and a water slide. Actually the beast's bright pink tongue forms the water slide. As ferocious as this sounds, however, the slide is quite tame. Short and fairly slow, it's appropriate for even the smallest children. Adding to the bright, festive feel are friendly Mardi Gras gator statues celebrating and playing instruments throughout the area. In addition, there is a secluded, almost hidden hot tub in a nearby shaded courtyard.

JW Marriott, Grande Lakes



The Marriott's 24,000-foot lazy river pool is a dream for adults needing a break. Unlike some of the other fast-moving lazy rivers in the area, this one is all about the very slow, very relaxing journey. In fact, after I heard two boys asking their dad to go faster, he smiled and said, "No, this is a lazy river. You need to learn what lazy means." Sharon and Jimmy Wright from Birmingham, Ala. shared that sentiment, as they looked for a place for both kids and adults. "It's fun and friendly for our kids, and they love it. But it's also relaxing and has hot tubs and places for adults. It's the best of both worlds," explains Sharon. "We've come to Orlando a lot and stayed at a lot of places," added Jimmy, "but this is the one I prefer – by far."

Disney's Boardwalk Inn

Confession time: this writer is a little afraid of clowns. So I was apprehensive about checking out a waterslide shaped like an old-time wooden roller coaster that ends by shooting you out of a clown's mouth. However, this is one friendly clown and one fun water slide. Named "Luna Park," the Boardwalk's brightly colored pool area has a carnival theme and features the clown-faced waterslide, a smallish pool flanked by elephants gently blowing water out of their trunks, a hot tub, a children's pool, a pre-school kids play area with water misters, and a carousel-shaped concession stand. But back to that water slide – it's long, it's fast, it's great.



Universal's Royal Pacific Resort



The Royal Pacific Resort offers a tropical theme around its zero-entry, heated and relaxing 320,000-gallon lagoon-style pool. Did we say relaxing? Well, not if you count the Royal Bali Sea, a large, interactive, cold water-spewing steamship, complete with water curtains, water cannons, and an erupting top. The ship proved especially popular with Eric and Sam Justice, 6- and 9-year-old brothers visiting the Royal Pacific and Hard Rock Hotels from Lake Wales, Fla. "The water was cold and everywhere, and I loved running through it. But the best part was then jumping into the warm-water pool," laughs Eric. In addition, the pool offers a sandy beach, water volleyball, water basketball, private cabana rentals and weekly dive-in movies.

While this list is far from complete, whether you're looking for exciting and thrilling (and often crowded), or quieter and calmer, you'll find many choices among the hotels and resorts around Orlando. And with Florida's mostly great

weather, these outdoor pools stay open all year long, with most heated seasonally. So the next time you (or your kids) want to take a day off and just enjoy your pool, go ahead! Use the down time to relax, regroup, and have fun.

Destination: Water Parks

For those wanting to spend the day swimming & splashing around an actual water park, the Orlando area offers plenty of choices.

- **Disney's Blizzard Beach** has a cool ski resort theme, family rides, and large waterslides such as the 120-foot Summit Plummet.
- **Disney's Typhoon Lagoon** offers a a shady, tropical feel, large wave pool, a reef area where guests can snorkel over tropical fish.
- **Wet 'n Wild** is full of thrill rides like Disco H2O along with multi-person rides and wakeskating around a river course.
- **SeaWorld's Aquatica**, a 59-acre water park, includes slides, tunnels, and tubes among lush landscaping and animal exhibits.
- **Gatorland's Gator Gully Splash Park** is a quarter-acre splash zone offering egret-shaped fountains and alligator water guns.
- **Bob Makinson Aquatic Center** has a zero-entry pool with water park features, lap pool, and 150-foot water slide, all for only \$4.
- **Cypress Gardens' Splash Island** has the Polynesian Adventure, drenching guests with 200 gallons of water every four minutes.
- **Adventure Island**, located next to Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, has 30 acres of thrill rides, a wave pool, and waterfalls.

SeaWorld Camps

Let Kids Dive-Into Fun

By Jennifer Fickley-Baker

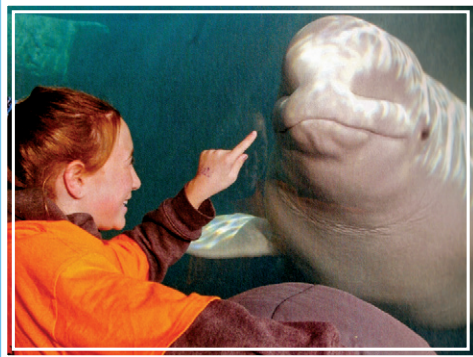
Thousands of people visit SeaWorld each year to get an up-close look at the park's amazing sealife, including seals, beluga whales, penguins, dolphins and of course, killer whales.

What these animal enthusiastic visitors may not know is that SeaWorld also offers a variety of day-camp experiences that allow students of all ages a closer look at these amazing creatures. These half-day, full-day and multi-day experiences not only take students behind the scenes to interact with SeaWorld's animals, but also give participants insight into animal care, marine biology, conservation and more, truly making it a learning experience of a lifetime.

"SeaWorld Adventure Camps offer fun, quality educational experiences along with superior safety standards," said Cindy McGovern, education marketing manager for SeaWorld and Busch Gardens. "From coming face to face with marine life in their environment to building friendships that will last a lifetime, SeaWorld Adventure Camps guarantee laughing and learning for all of our campers."

A variety of half-day camps are available for students in kindergarten through eighth-grade. All half-day camps run \$229 to \$269 per person and include lunch, snacks, take-home crafts and a complimentary T-shirt, in addition to their interactive animal experience.

Students in kindergarten or first-grade



Some camps include an overnight stay.

can embark on the "Sea Hideaway" or "Do You See What I Sea?" half-day camp, which include up-close animal encounters and lessons on animal camouflage.

Children in grades two and three have a choice of the "What's for Lunch?" and "Ocean Odyssey" half-day camps. "What's for Lunch?" offers kids a chance to learn about animal diets and gives them a chance to feed the park's dolphins, flamingos and rays, while "Ocean Odyssey" teaches kids about animal migration.

Fourth- and fifth-graders have their choice of "Animal Antics" and "Conservation Patrol" (\$229 to \$269). "Animal Antics" gives kids a look into how sea animals are trained, as well as close-up looks at penguins and dolphins. "The Conservation Patrol" half-day camp teaches kids how they can become environmental ambassadors by learning about the animal rehabilitation programs underway at SeaWorld.

There also are seasonal half-day camps for pre-school-age children, which run \$50 per child. These half-day experiences combine holiday themes with specific animals in the park. For example, the



Shamu and a friend visit kids during the camp's closing ceremonies.



Counselors teach campers about the many types of animals at SeaWorld.

"Eggs, Eggs, Eggs Seafari" takes place during Easter time and allows children to learn more about the park's egg-laying animals, the penguins. The "Fish-or-Treat Halloween Seafari" is offered in October and allows children to collect candy while they learn that sea animals, like sharks and alligators, aren't as scary as they may seem.

SeaWorld also offers full-day camps that gives students a deeper look at the park's wondrous sealife, and costs an average of \$329 to \$369 per person.

For children in kindergarten and first-grade, there's "Secrets of the Sea," which gives its young participants a look at killer whales, polar bears, sea lions and other

animals.

Children in grades two and three can enroll in "Animal Addresses," which teaches children where killer whales, sea lions and other park animals come from. The "Ocean Commotion" day camp is another option, which tells children all about how sea lions, stingrays and penguins avoid predators while finding food.

Students in grades four and five can "Walk on the Wild Side," with a full-day experience that lets them see attractions and shows, as well as hands-on encounters with dolphins, penguins and more.

Ambitious pre-teens in grades six to eight can learn more about careers with animals by signing up for the "Wild Careers" day camp. Here, students go behind the scenes at SeaWorld and Busch Gardens to learn more about preparing food and caring for animals at both parks.

Multi-Day Resident Camps also are another option. These camps offer students several days of learning and interacting with the park's staff and wild life. Because they are multiple days and may involve experiences at multiple theme parks, they range in price from \$975 to \$2,200 per person.

"Ocean Explorers" (\$975 per person) gives children in grades five and six an in-water look at some of the parks aquatic animals, including interacting with dolphins, snorkeling in a shark cage, experiencing attractions and spending a night in the beluga whale/manatee area of the park.

"Career Camp" (\$1,350 per person) gives students in grades seven to nine a chance to discover what it's like to train and work with sea animals on a daily basis. Attendees get to talk to animal experts, visit on-site animal

rehabilitation centers, and experience the amenities of Discovery Cove where they can swim with a dolphin, snorkel with tropical fish and stingrays, and more.

"Advanced Career Camp" (\$1,350 per person) caters to students in grades 10 to 12. This group gets to learn about SeaWorld's animals and their habitats, and also gets to experience Discovery Cove.

"Coastal Career Discovery" (\$2,200 per person) is designed for students in grades 10 to 12 who are deeply interested in pursuing a career with animals or ecology. This day camp includes many in-park experiences, such as snorkeling in a shark cage and swimming with dolphins, but also takes a trip to Everglades National Park and a snorkel trip in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Entire families also can get in on the fun by participating in a "Family Sleepover" program. Each sleepover experience starts at 7 p.m. Families enjoy pizza, play games, and spend the night in a secure animal habitat. Themed sleepovers also are offered at different times of the year, such as the "Egg-cellent Adventure Family Sleepover," which offers families a chance to learn more about the park's egg-laying penguins, and the "Hot Summer Night Family Sleepover," in which families can relax and explore the Wild Arctic area of the park, which includes walrus, beluga whales and polar bears.

Due to popularity of all of these programs, space is extremely limited, so early registration is suggested. Learn more or register by visiting www.swbg-adventurecamp.com.



At camp, kids can get close-up with the animals.





SPACESHIP EARTH EVOLVES

into an interactive
adventure through time

By Susan Veness

Photos by

Jeff Bergman

Tim Devine

Matt Roseboom

*"Like a grand
and miraculous
spaceship, our
planet has sailed
through the
universe
of time..."*



SPACESHIP EARTH GLOWS IN A MULTITUDE OF HUES AT NIGHT, WELCOMING INCOMING GUESTS TO EPCOT.

Epcot's iconic Spaceship Earth ride had its official reopening on Feb. 19 after a major makeover to go with the new sponsorship by German electronics company, Siemens. It was a significant investment of time, energy and money by the Walt Disney Company and puts the Epcot park firmly back in focus.

Spaceship Earth was one of the EPCOT Center's original attractions, dedicated on the opening day of Oct. 1, 1982, and it has been the main visual symbol ever

since, a huge geodesic sphere which many still refer to as a giant golf ball.

It has gone through several refurbishments in the past 26 years and even suffered the indignity (in the eyes of Disney purists) of having a giant Mickey hand imposed over it for the start of the Millennium celebrations in 2000.

Epcot Vice-President Jim MacPhee, who took over as the park supremo last summer, was instrumental in returning Spaceship Earth (or SSE, in the online shorthand used by Disney fans) to its pristine original look last year, and now

comes the biggest series of changes in the ride's history.

The most significant change involves what Disney is lauding as the ride's new interactive finale, and which has moved several "old-timers" among the fans to think of the former Horizons pavilion, where the ride vehicles had a more basic version of a push-button response system. However, MacPhee stated, "Touch screens have been added to the ride vehicles, but if there is an homage, it is to Walt Disney Imagineering and Spaceship Earth, not to Horizons."

Scenes from Spaceship Earth: Communication through the Ages



As the Imagineers explain it, the new ride is “a trip through time, where guests discover how each generation of mankind has invented the future for the next generation, and how the spirit of innovation has moved people from caves to the cosmos.”

Although a story line featuring the history of communication was appropriate when Bell System and later, AT&T, were the attraction’s sponsor, Siemens branding focuses on technology. As guests ascend into the story, that change in message becomes apparent straight away. The opening scenes are no longer static, appearing instead as living, moving elements which draw guests into each tableau rather than allowing them to sit back and simply observe.

Riders feel the tension as a prehistoric battle of wills between man and beast is acted out in front of them; cave paintings dance across fire-lit walls, signifying the power of artistic expression; characters in each scene move gracefully, naturally, greatly enhanced through the dynamics of imagination and the advancements

in technology.

Other new elements, which those familiar with Spaceship Earth will notice, are several additional scenes – a

same period featuring the old reel-to-reel computers; a home garage of the early ‘70s (above, far-right), where the personal computer was born; and the final

flourish of the “tech tunnel,” in which guests are invited to become part of the digital data stream.

However, the Imagineers have not ignored the rest of the ride and its elements, and every scene has been touched up by the big update project in one way or another, with sharper colors, smoother movements and enhanced lighting.

Some of the Audio-Animatronic characters have also been recast into new roles. The former lead actor in the Greek drama scene now appears as a math teacher (above, far left), with his students having traded in their former roles as thespians, while the young Renaissance boy appears to have aged, and now sports a full beard.

Show Producer Bob Zalk of Disney Imagineering, who was involved in the original creation of the ride as one of his very first projects with the company as a junior audio-engineer, insists: “Practically every



THE TELEPHONE REVOLUTIONIZED COMMUNICATION.

family in the late 1960s viewing the moon landing on TV; an extensive “computer room” (above, second from right) of the



Morse Code

Computer Room
of the '60s

Computer Room
of the '70s

audio-animatronics figure in Spaceship Earth has been updated in one way or another. To make the figures more realistic, they have received a makeover of everything, from their hair, to their costumes, to their movements."

Zalk's relationship with the project's redesign is a homecoming of sorts. "As a new employee back in the early '80s, I was in awe of all the talented Imagineers I first met and worked with," he recalled. "Fast-forward now, many of those memories came flooding back to me as I walked through the scenes and listened to the audio tracks. I never dreamed I would return in another role, leading a team re-imagining it for new generations of Disney guests. Our entire team was excited and respectful to continue the legacy of this great attraction!"

He is particularly proud the team was able to add to the core show elements. "The redesign enabled us to tell a new, very relevant story, a story that involves an exciting layer of guest interactivity and technological links that extend our story beyond the ride and into an engaging post show of family fun activities."

It has been quite a task, though, and an especially onerous one for the Imagineers involved, as SSE has a huge place in the hearts of many Disney goers. Disney legend and international ambassador Marty Sklar even commented at the

25th anniversary celebrations of Epcot last October: "'It's a small world' is my favorite ride because of the message of unity it projects, but Spaceship Earth is my second favorite."

There is also an all-new musical score, composed by Bruce Broughton (winner of

Disney's 12-year alliance with Siemens includes sponsorship of attractions beyond Spaceship Earth. The company also sponsors Epcot's nighttime spectacular, IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth as well as attractions in Innoventions at Epcot and Disneyland. Through their Sylvania division, Siemens also sponsors Hollywood Studios' Osborne Spectacle of Dancing Lights, Disney's Electrical Parade and Walt Disney's Parade of Dreams at Disneyland in California.

a record 10 Emmy Awards and nominated for an Oscar and a Grammy during his long and varied career), featuring a 62-piece orchestra and 24-voice choir to bring the ride fully to life.

Zalk added: "We're telling a different story this time. Our new story is essentially about how all the innovations of one generation influence and inspire

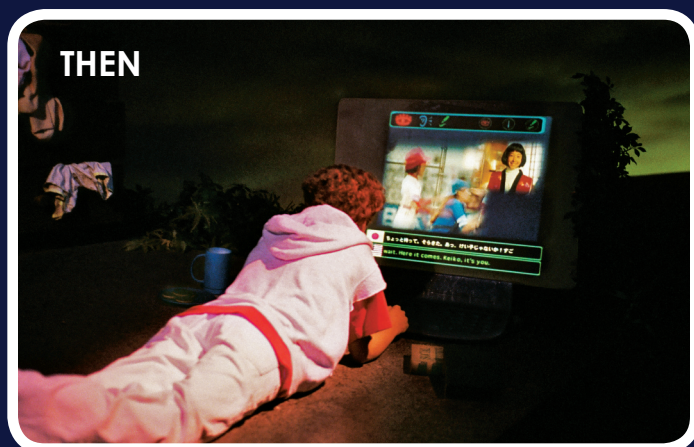
another. There's definitely a relationship between the cavemen in the early scenes, who are writing on walls, to our era in which we write on computers. It's a series of building blocks that add upon each other as we travel up through Spaceship Earth."

Although he wasn't Spaceship Earth's first narrator – that distinction belongs to American voice actor, Vic Perrin – television news anchorman Walter Cronkite brought a sense of quiet dignity to the commentary after a 1986 refurbishment. "The most trusted man in America" became the attraction's best-known and arguably, most beloved voice, leading riders along a journey through time, with passive education as the primary focus.

A second remodel took place in 1994, replacing Cronkite's voice with that of English actor Jeremy Irons. The effect was startling. Iron's narration evoked a spirit of adventure, a world filled with exciting possibility.

The recent refurbishment introduced the voice of Academy Award winning actress Dame Judi Dench, and a revamped script that pulls existing tableaus together with new scenes, weaving a somewhat loose fabric of innovation, technology and the promise of a bright new tomorrow.

Pam Fisher, Walt Disney Imagineering senior show writer, said, "Dame Judi



ONCE VIDEO-CHATTING WORLDWIDE IN THE '90s, THIS BOY IS NOW WATCHING THE MOON LANDING ON TV IN THE '60s.

Dench is one of the greatest actresses of her time. But she also has that warm personality found in all true storytellers. We wanted more than a great orator, we wanted a great storyteller who could welcome us into that story and help us discover our path in it."

Fisher fully appreciates the established popularity of the attraction, but believes the new story line offers guests an even deeper experience. "Our goal was to empower people, especially children, with the notion that they make a difference," she said, "that their hopes and dreams and interests are creating the future every day."

Guest reaction to the change has been decidedly mixed. Many Disney purists

feel the narration has been dumbed down. Others find it less serious and more family-friendly.

The interactive finale with touch-screen technology has also generated uneven guest reaction. Although most visitors give their stamp of approval to the whimsical "choose your future" element and are amused by the addition of their likeness as an animated character, some find it too cartoony and not quite worthy of the vast creativity that sets Disney's Imagineers apart from all others.

But the "starfield" descent leaves many guests cold, as it has lost many of the lighting effects that eased the transition "back to Earth." The tunnel seems barren and, while riders' attention is meant to be focused on the screen, the surrounding darkness strikes many as unsettling.

One area that has received enthusiastic approval, though, is the post-show area, which is no longer static. Interactive games with a subtle nod toward Siemens' medical, transportation and energy distribution product line-up await as guests disembark the time-travel experience, inviting them to visit "Project Tomorrow: Inventing the World of Tomorrow," where hands-on exhibits bring to life the ideas and technologies Siemens is developing.

"There's Body Builder," said Zalk, "in which you wear 3-D glasses to assemble a digital human body (who talks back to you!), which simulates Siemens' remote surgery technology. Then we have Super Driver, a driving simulation video game that showcases Siemens' auto accident

avoidance systems.

"Innervision shows you the future of medical diagnostics in your home – something like your bathroom mirror giving you diagnostics on your body. And Power City is a game which shows how to manage power in a growing city, from routing power to neighborhoods where it's needed to replacing fossil fuels with wind and solar power."

The fun, interactive games and displays have certainly proven a hit with the kids, with Power City attracting the young 'uns while the older guests gravitate to Super Driver.

In keeping with the design at Test Track and Mission: Space, the post-show area is also accessible without experiencing the ride first, making it an attraction unto itself and a welcome relief from the typical gift shop good-bye more commonly found at ride exits.

"One thing we're not going to do is ruin the magic," said Senior Vice President for Corporate Sponsorship, Lawrence Aldridge, responding to the perception that corporate placement may be taking too large a role in the parks.

However, it shouldn't be forgotten that Walt Disney's original intent for Epcot was a community of people and alliances with business, with an eye toward the ongoing interaction of ideas, creativity and innovation.

And innovation really is the crux of it. Fisher points out, "Nobody really knows who began to invent papyrus in ancient Egypt, but whoever it was invented a better future for all in generations to come, including ours." ●●●●●



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CULTURE IS ON THE MENU

AT

Emeril's TCHOUP CHOP

RESTAURANT
DISHES UP
POLYNESIAN-ASIAN
FUSION CUISINE

BY JENNIFER FICKLEY-BAKER

Dining at Emeril's Tchoup Chop restaurant at Universal Orlando's Royal Pacific Resort is more than just a meal – it's an experience that takes you and your taste buds on a culinary tour through Asian-Polynesian cultures.

The colorful and luxurious interior of the restaurant alone gives you the idea that the restaurant is something unique. Its open kitchen gives diners views of the establishment's 22 cooks and four chefs prepping food, and the trendy Asian-influenced décor – including an elegant lily pond in the center of the room – makes it a lively (and lovely) place to start a night out on the town.

The creative menu is the real draw to Emeril's Tchoup Chop, which was named “#1 Best Overall Restaurant” by



CHEF DE CUISINE NICHOLAS SHUST POSES IN FRONT OF THE RESTAURANT'S LARGE WINE SELECTION.

AOL City Guide in 2006 and won an "Award of Excellence" by Wine Spectator magazine. Open daily for lunch and dinner, items on the lunch menu range from wok-fried yellowtail snapper served with Thai noodles to macadamia nut-encrusted Atlantic salmon with ginger-soy butter sauce. The dinner menu is even more extensive with a long list of creative dishes like miso soup with lobster, braised lamb shank marinated in Chinese mustard, and Asian wok bouillabaisse. Asian and Polynesian influences extend to the dessert menu, too, which features items such as warm pineapple upside down cake with ginger ice cream, and frozen coconut soufflés.

At the helm of this innovative menu is Chef de Cuisine Nicholas Shust who has worked at Emeril's Tchoup Chop since its opening five years ago. He explains that while most of the original menu items were developed by Chef/Proprietor Emeril Lagasse and his chefs at the company headquarters in New Orleans, Shust has since made a few changes to make the menu items appeal even more to diners' tastes.

"It was probably more Asian style

The "Emeril" of Emeril's Tchoup Chop is none other than the world-famous chef, Emeril Lagasse. Lagasse began his culinary career in his teenage years at a Portuguese bakery in his childhood home town of Fall River, Mass.

Lagasse went on to graduate from Johnson and Wales University, learn valuable cooking skills in France, and ultimately return to the United States where he ended up as the executive chef at Commander's Palace in New Orleans. He now owns restaurants in six cities across the United States, each with its own unique style, cuisine, and flair.

Outside of his restaurants, he is best known for his numerous television appearances and shows on the Food Network. While his restaurants remain his own, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Inc. recently purchased the Emeril Lagasse franchise of cookbooks, television shows and kitchen products for a total of \$50-70 million in cash and stock.



EMERIL LAGASSE



THE COLORFUL INTERIOR GIVES YOU THE IDEA THAT THE RESTAURANT IS SOMETHING UNIQUE.

when it first opened up, and the concept was a little bit difficult for people to grasp," he said. "We took it back to more of what people are familiar with as far as Emeril's food goes. We describe it as an Asian-Polynesian restaurant, and that pretty much gives me carte blanche to do anything I want because so many cultures have gone through those areas, so we can mix and match flavors and textures from very diverse cultures without really crossing any lines that don't exist."

According to Shust, one dish that exemplifies the menu's diversity is the

restaurant's peking duck.

"I took the original concept from the duck we do at Nola [Restaurant in New Orleans] where it's poached and glazed. We do a cashew-style stir-fry rice and I found some pickled plums and came up with a sauce for it. It all just kind of came together. Its stir-fried rice is Chinese and the way we do the peking duck is sort of a combination of the way we do it in New Orleans."

One of the menu items even adds a little Eastern flavor to a Lagasse original – his BAM!-a-licious barbecue, a signature dish served at all Lagasse restaurants.

"The barbecue that's on our menu is basically his barbecue recipe that you'll find in every one of his restaurants, only we've tweaked it a little bit in order to take it in an Asian direction by adding a little bit of ginger to the base and adding a spice to it that gives it a little more Asian style," Shust said.

Kids aren't left out of the fun, either. For picky eaters, the children's menu offers the usual kid fare, like chicken fingers and burgers. But for those kids who like to experiment, there are smaller portions of more grown-up dishes, like a kid-size filet mignon and chicken alfredo.

Emeril's Tchoup Chop is open for lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., and dinner from 5:30 to 10 p.m., daily. (Dinner is served 5:30 to 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.) For reservations, call 407-503-2467. ●●●●●



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COMICS, TOYS, & COSTUMES - EACH YEAR, TWO BIG CONVENTIONS, THE FX SHOW AND MEGACON, ROLL INTO TOWN ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST SCI-FAN, ANIME, COMIC, AND VIDEO GAME FANS, TO CELEBRATE THEIR FANDOM.

FX 2008

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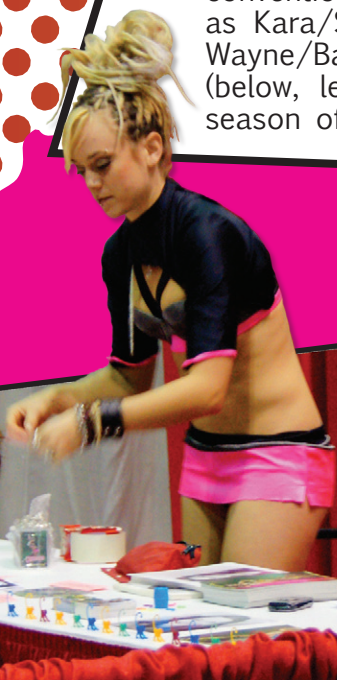
THE FX SHOW IS ORLANDO'S BEST SPOT FOR RE-BUYING YOUR CHILDHOOD TOY COLLECTION.



STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTERS, BOTH JUNIOR AND SENIOR, ARE A COMMON FIND AT FX.

FX is the first show of its kind each calendar year, taking place at the end of January or early February. The focus of FX is mainly on collectibles, where you can find anything from the latest Jack Sparrow action figure to that plush Stay Puft Marshmallow Man that you had when you were a child, but your mom gave away to the neighbor kid when you became "too old." You can also find several rows of well-known and unknown comic artists, showing off their latest creations.

The longest lines form where celebrities (and pseudo-celebrities) line one wall of the convention hall. This year, stars included Laura Vandervoort (below, right), better known as Kara/Supergirl in TV's *Smallville*, Adam West (below, center), better known as Bruce Wayne/Batman from the original 1960s TV show *Batman*, and Tonya Kay & Mary Votava (below, left, respectively), better known as Creature and Monkeywoman from the first season of The Sci-Fi Channel's *Who Wants to be a Superhero?*.



FROM STAR WARS TO STAR TREK, FROM HEROES TO THE X-FILES, NO POPULAR SCI-FI, FANTASY, OR HORROR PROPERTY GETS UNMENTIONED AT THE ANNUAL CONVENTIONS. BELOW ARE SOME OF THE INCREDIBLE SIGHTS THAT WERE WITNESSED THIS YEAR.

MEGA CON

March
7-9,
2008



**DR. DOOM'S NEW TORTURE RAY?
NO, JUST A TEETH WHITENING
BOOTH AT MEGA CON.**



MegaCon is largely driven by the fans ... that is, the fans who dress as their favorite fictional characters, many of whom you likely have never heard of. The characters are often from obscure anime series, horror and sci-fi films that tanked at the box office but became cult classics, as well as recognizable and outlandish video games. Some familiar faces do occasionally appear in the crowds, like Prince Eric and Ariel (above, left) from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and Link (above, center) from *The Legend of Zelda* series of video games.

Booths at MegaCon range from the expected sales of comics & collectibles to the unexpected tattoo parlor. Role playing games are available in many forms, including video games, board & dice games, and even live action (as in, battling with foam swords).

While fans dominate MegaCon, there is certainly no shortage of celebrities. The roster of stars in 2008 included Adrian Pasdar (below, right), who plays Nathan Petrelli on the hit TV show *Heroes*, Kristy Swanson (below, middle) best known for her role as Buffy in the original film *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and Dan Williams and Jarrett Crippen (below, left, respectively), Parthenon and The Defuser from the second season of *Who Wants to be a Superhero?*.



DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM LODGE turns vacations into safaris

By Jennifer Fickley-Baker



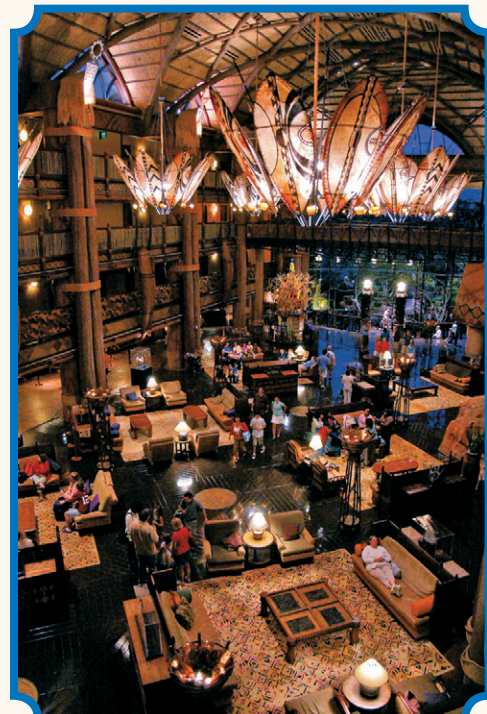
Each year, thousands of vacationers become enamored with Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge – Disney's African-themed resort that immerses families in the peace of an African savanna and the beauty of African culture, which are showcased in the resort's art, guest rooms and dining locations.

The resort first opened its doors in 2001 to offer three restaurants and 1,293 guest rooms, many offering views of the adjacent 33-acre savanna that's complete with roaming animals. To prepare for the design and construction of such a unique resort, Walt Disney Imagineers (WDI) visited more than 20 African lodges to gain a better understanding of African heritage and culture in order to make the Lodge as authentic as possible.

"We're trying to capture an image that is not only symbolic of Africa but is culturally relevant," said Project Manager Jim Kwasnowski of Walt Disney Imagineering.

One way the Imagineers have incorporated African culture into the Lodge is in the entrance. Its horseshoe shape is based on the African kraal (pronounced "crawl"), which is a design used in African villages to keep homes safe from harm. Other touches are a mud fireplace, thatched roof, and windows that were specifically put in place to accentuate the natural light produced by the sunrise and sunset on the savanna. The individual guest rooms also feature handcrafted furniture and art made in Africa.

According to Guest Service Operations Manager Valerie Charron, the resort's savanna is by far one of the most striking aspects of the resort. It's currently home to more than 200 animals and birds, including wildebeest, bongos, gazelles, impala, zebra, giraffe, marabou stork and sacred ibis. Families are welcome to watch the animals from the resort's outdoor patio, which features several lookout spots, and a savanna guide on hand to answer questions



The Resort's Open Main Lobby.



Guest rooms are intricately designed with an up-scale African flavor.

about the animals. Resort guests can also book a “savanna view” room and view the animals from their room’s balcony.

“Guests just gather and reconnect with the natural world out there,” said Charron. “They find themselves submersed in this African village stirring with life. It’s such a beautiful place. We have people that come here from Africa and they say it’s the closest thing to Africa they’ve seen. You can sit on your balcony and look out and see a giraffe, or zebra or wallabee.”

According to Charron, one of the best-kept secrets of the resort is just how much there is to do, see and experience. A

series of kid-friendly programs and adult enrichment opportunities are offered at the Lodge, and range from animal education programs to activities themed on African music and folklore.

“I think the best-hidden secret of this resort is the amount of activities that we have for adults and children: storytime at the fire pit, African games and crafts, cookie decorating,” she said. “At night we have the Primal Parade, where kids go around marching through the lobby and afterwards you can listen to a presentation by one of the savanna guides. You don’t even have to go anywhere when you come here.”

Lodge guests also can sign up for exclusive resort experiences, such as the Wanyama Safari experience (\$160 for adults, \$80 for children age 8-9). Available to an extremely limited number of guests, a maximum of 12 people board a special vehicle at 4 p.m. each day for a jaunt across the resort’s savanna. The trip gives the group a picturesque view of the Lodge as well as an opportunity to



The Wanyama Safari entertains up to 12 guests.

A Safari of Art

The intricate artistic details found throughout the resort add even more significance and authenticity to the resort’s design.

The centerpiece of the art collection at Disney’s Animal Kingdom Lodge is a 16-foot-tall Igbo Ijele (pronounced e-bo e-gelay, pictured below) mask, featured in the lobby. The Ijele, created by the Igbo people of Africa, is a massive creation that towers more than 16 feet tall and is eight feet in width. In Africa, the mask signifies an important event or celebration and makes rare appearances. No other Ijele, which is the largest mask in tropical Africa, is known to exist outside of Igbo land.

The vivid colors and complex design represent all aspects of the Igbo life. The Ijele is the largest mask in sub-Saharan Africa and is “danced” by a single man hidden within it. An Ijele is only danced every 10 to 25 years at important events and celebrations. The Ijele that graces the lobby was created and danced specifically for export.



take up-close photos of giraffes, zebras and more. The adventure ends with a traditional African feast at one of the resort's restaurants.

Animal Curator Greg Peccie said the safari recreates the essence of an African safari with free-roaming wildlife in an authentic environment.

"We wanted to give our guests a close look at our animals, understand how we manage the animals and offer a glimpse into the training of the animals," Peccie said.

Adventures in Dining

African culture is not only showcased in the lavish décor of the Lodge, but through the cuisine dished up in two of its restaurants, Boma and Jiko, which both serve African cuisine. The menus offered in both restaurants reflect African spices and cooking methods, including the use of woodburning ovens and the incorporation of cinnamon, pepper, citrus and curry spices.

Brian Piasecki (below), chef de cuisine at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, said that guests are often surprised by what African food consists of and are surprised by how much they enjoy it.



that guests are often surprised by what African food consists of and are surprised by how much they enjoy it.

"[The restaurants] are a different and unique experience I think," Piasecki

said. "People have come to realize that African cuisine and what we do at Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge is different than what they get anywhere else. Because they've never had African food, they don't really know what it is, so they're surprised that it's so full of flavor and that it's so uncomplicated. It really is simple food, the recipes and style of cooking in Africa have been handed down and passed down for generations. Our feedback ranges from guest comments like, 'It's been the best



Boma (above) and Jiko (below) represent the best in African cuisine.

meal of my life!' to a 4 Diamond Award from AAA for Jiko."

Boma – Flavors of Africa is an all-you-care-to-eat buffet that's open for breakfast and dinner. The restaurant features an open kitchen and several onsite cooking stations that allow guests to have their



entrées freshly prepared for them. Here, diners can line up for wood-fired prime rib, chicken, roasted salmon with chutney and banana leaves, and boboti, a specialty dish popular in Capetown, South Africa.

A designated children's buffet offers traditional American options as well, including chicken fingers and Mickey macaroni-and-cheese.

Jiko – The Cooking Place, a neighboring restaurant to Boma, is the Lodge's elegant table service restaurant, which is open only for dinner.

"Jiko is a little bit more of an upscale interpretation of the food of South Africa as well as other areas of Africa," Piasecki explained. "There's some Ethiopian influence and some Moroccan influence as well. At Jiko, our presentations are upscale and the food is upscale, but at the same time it's family food, it's community food."

The restaurant also offers the largest South African wine list in the United States, with more than 65 wineries represented. According to Sommelier Jeremy Corday, the restaurant's team has been educated in the extensive wine list, so when diners request a common wine, they can recommend something special from the South Africa region as another option.

"It really is an education in South African wines," Corday said. "For every classic style of wine, there's a comparable South African varietal, from whites – chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, semillon or chenin blanc to reds – cabernet sauvignon,

shiraz, pinot noir or merlot."

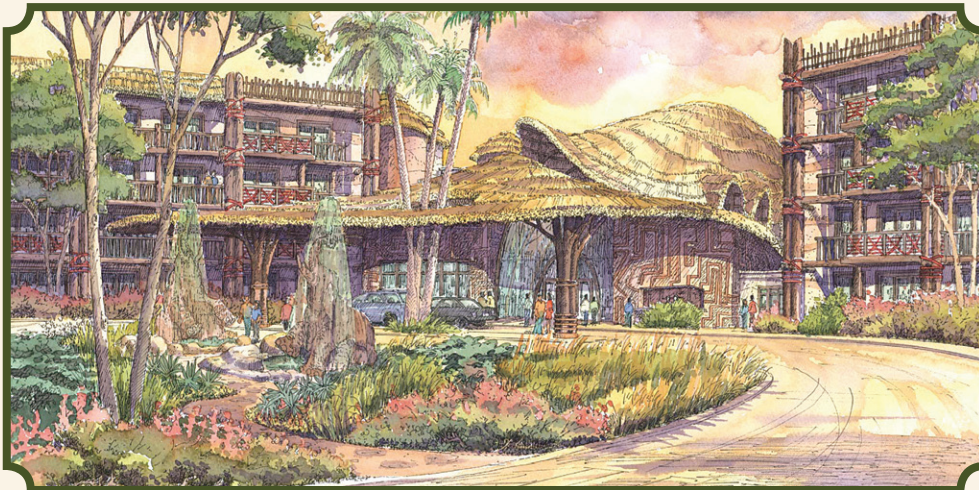
Entertainment, Exclusive Experiences & More

Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge is full of amenities that can keep guests of all ages entertained, such as a 9,000-square-foot pool with a 67-foot waterslide and two hot tubs. Adults can indulge in some spoiling at the Zahanati Massage and Fitness Center, which offers facials, body treatments and massages, and young children can enjoy an evening at Simba's Cubhouse, a children's activity center, Pumbaa's Fun and Games arcade and the Hakuna Matada Playground.

For those guests hoping to take a little piece of Disney's Animal Kingdom home with them, there's Zawadi Marketplace, one of the largest merchandise shops at the Walt Disney World Resort, which celebrates the adventuresome spirit of Africa through the merchandise it offers, such as zulu baskets from Botswana, Songye Masks, hand-carved chess sets and more.

Guests staying at the Club Concierge level also can enjoy added amenities, such as access to vacation planners, complimentary refreshments, and more.

"Once you book your concierge room, they send you all your itinerary planning," Charron said. "You also have the exclusive Club Level where you have the morning



breakfast, in the afternoon they have snacks and tea, and at night they have a little offering that showcases what we have here at the restaurants in the resort."

Concierge-level guests also can sign up for Sunrise Safari, an experience that includes watching the sunrise on the savanna at Disney's Animal Kingdom and then toasting the experience over breakfast.

Future Expansion

Disney Vacation Club, Disney's vacation-ownership program, announced the construction of Disney's Animal Kingdom Villas last year, which will be built as an extension of Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge (concept art above). The

villas, which are scheduled to open in 2009, will feature intricate African-inspired details and home-like amenities, and most will offer sweeping views of an expanded savanna inhabited by a variety of African animals.

The project's first phase includes 134 remodeled accommodations on the fifth and sixth floors of the existing Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge building, and subsequent phases will include the construction of 324 vacation homes in a new building on the resort property, for a total of 458 Disney Vacation Club homes. The project also calls for construction of a new table-service restaurant, themed pool and water-play island, fitness center, merchandise shop, sports and recreation facilities and more.

"We continue to see strong demand from families who want to build a lifetime of unforgettable memories by vacationing in ways they never dreamed possible," said Jim Lewis, president of Disney Vacation Club. "I am delighted to announce that our members will have yet another place to call home with Disney's Animal Kingdom Villas."

All Disney Vacation Club resort rooms are available to all guests wishing to book them on property, based on availability at time of booking.

Reservations for Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge can be made by calling (407) 934-7639. ●●●●●

Hidden Mickey Spotted!

Many Disney guests say finding "Hidden Mickeys," or Mickey Mouse silhouettes purposefully placed into the design of resorts, dining locations or theme park attractions, is one of the highlights of their day.

Here are a few locations you may stop and spot Mickey if you look hard enough:

- Jiko's pizza oven
- Resort carpeting
- Guestroom bedspreads and/or drapes
- A leopard painting in the lobby
- Health club elevator (pictured right)

Visit the gift shop for a full list of clues to many more Hidden Mickeys.



WHY IS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT FEELING SO BLUE?

By Chad D. Emerson

With its iconic spinning globe logo, Universal Orlando is one of the country's best known and most successful vacation destinations. But, early last June, the resort found itself feeling very blue.

That's because — for the first time ever — the award-winning Blue Man Group debuted its unique form of entertainment at a permanent theme park show. And, to drive home the point, Universal unveiled a massive 30-foot-tall façade featuring the three Blue Man performers.

Never before had three bald and blue-headed entertainers caused such an exciting vibe within the amusement industry.

An Entertainment Option that Fits the Brand

With the Walt Disney World Resort just miles away, one might suspect that a non-Disney option could struggle to draw big crowds in the Central Florida

amusement market. While Disney is certainly the attendance leader, Universal Orlando has carved out an impressive piece of the overall puzzle by branding itself as a slightly more cutting-edge option. Taller coasters, faster rides, and a Hard Rock Hotel: All fitting together as part of a plan that has seen average guest spending at Universal regularly increase in recent years.

So when Universal leaders decided the time was right to bring a separately ticketed entertainment show to the resort, Paul Rothenberg, Universal's vice president of national/group/specialty sales was tasked with finding an option unique to the Central Florida market.

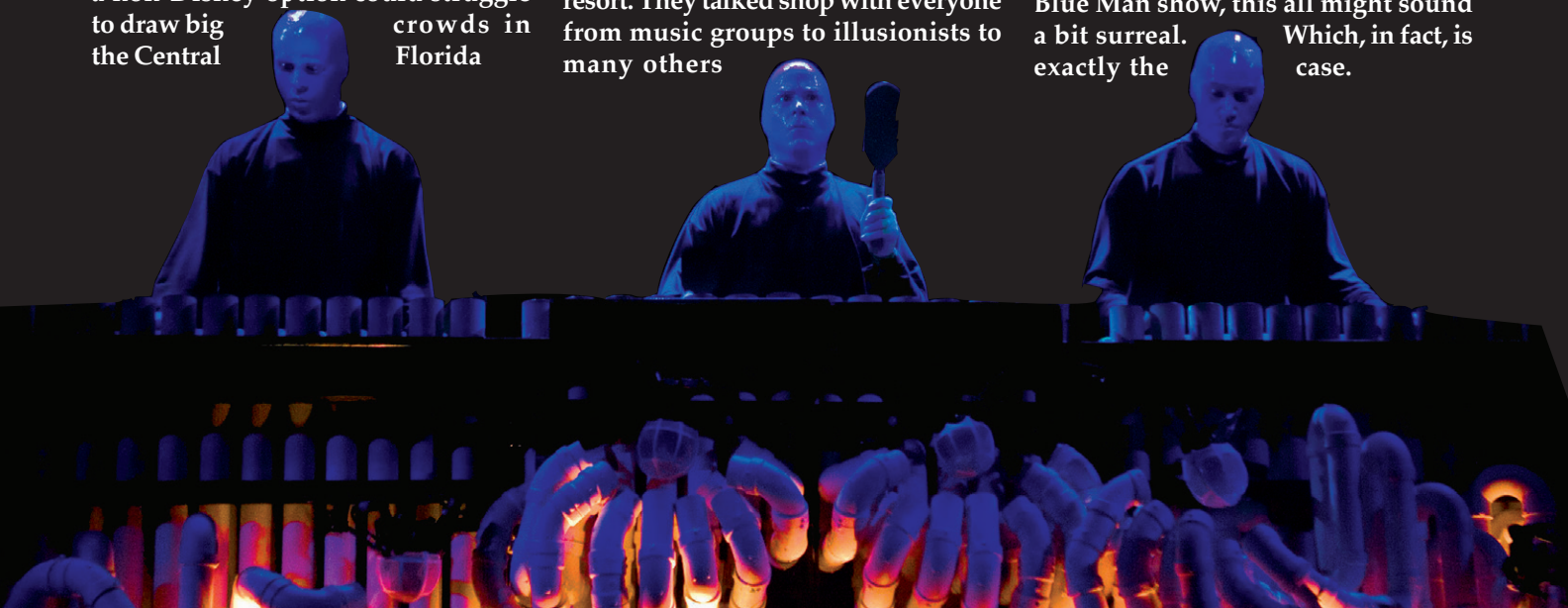
To begin the search, Rothenberg explained that Universal "was looking for an act with an edge that works well with our brand." This led Rothenberg and his team to Las Vegas and elsewhere to meet with a variety of high-profile performers about joining forces with the resort. They talked shop with everyone from music groups to illusionists to many others



in between.

Ultimately, Universal settled on the Blue Man Group — a one-of-a-kind troupe whose show combines percussion, high-energy music, a steady dose of physical comedy and dozens of gallons of colorful paint that literally explode on stage. All performed by three characters dressed in black with their bald heads painted a glossy blue (plus, an equally eclectic rock band providing support).

Now, if you've never been to a Blue Man show, this all might sound a bit surreal. Which, in fact, is exactly the case.





Blue Man Group Founders Matt Goldman, Phil Stanton, & Chris Wink.

But, despite this uniqueness, the group and its crazy combination of sights and sounds has found artistic and commercial success almost everywhere they've gone. This has included Broadway, Las Vegas and a variety of traveling shows. Not bad for a group that started in the 1980s by performing impromptu theater on the streets of New York City.

Since that time, Blue Man has developed an international cadre of live shows, television appearances, music and merchandising. So when it came to creating Central Florida's second hard ticket theme park show (following Cirque du Soleil's La Nouba at Downtown Disney), Universal pulled out all the stops for Blue Man Group's first foray into the vacation mecca known as Orlando.

Marketing More than Just a Show

According to Matt Goldman, one of the Blue Man Group founders, Universal piqued his interest by offering more than just a Central Florida home for his team. Instead, the company promised an integrated strategy where the resort would feature the Blue Man brand in a comprehensive promotional campaign. For starters, this involved building an exclusive theater for the act — one that featured customized lighting, sound, and seating, all key parts for a full-fledged Blue Man

experience.

Indeed, according to Rothenberg, the venue (officially, the Sharp AQUOS Theatre) is one of "the most technically advanced spaces that Universal has ever created. It's a theater planned around giving the guest the best show possible."

But Universal's promotional efforts were not limited to the actual show. Indeed, while the Blue Men were fine-tuning their Orlando act, Universal's marketing and meetings team were doing the same. The result was a creative campaign where merchandising, group sales and special vacation packages were integrated into the whole Blue Man project.

For instance, Universal and Blue Man collaborated on a series of original merchandise pieces unique to the Florida show. This ranged from Blue Man gear, show music, and a variety of exclusive collectibles available throughout the resort — giving guests to this show something not available anywhere else. Similarly, the Universal version, while similar in some respects to the current Las Vegas one, offers several unique scenes, including a creative nod to the theme park world (no spoilers here, you'll have to see for yourself).

The partnership also developed a variety of group event options themed to the Blue Man experience. Available to both large vacation groups and corporate gatherings, Universal's

in-house meetings team can craft everything from a show buyout to a Blue-themed reception replete with blue decorations, signature blue drinks and even performer visits.

According to Rothenberg, "creative limits to a Blue Man group event don't really exist for us. Our special events team can be as creative as you could ever need."

What's Next?

So, the obvious question is where does the Blue Man Group and Universal go from here?

While neither Blue Man nor Universal were prepared to announce new plans at the premiere, Goldman did express an interest in the possibility of future Blue Man-themed dining venues or theme park attractions. Making a point that these are more "blue sky" (pun intended) ideas than imminent plans, Goldman explained "the Blue Man Group and Universal partnership could easily be expanded in the future." He even joked that Universal's popular Halloween Horror Nights could one day look great in blue.

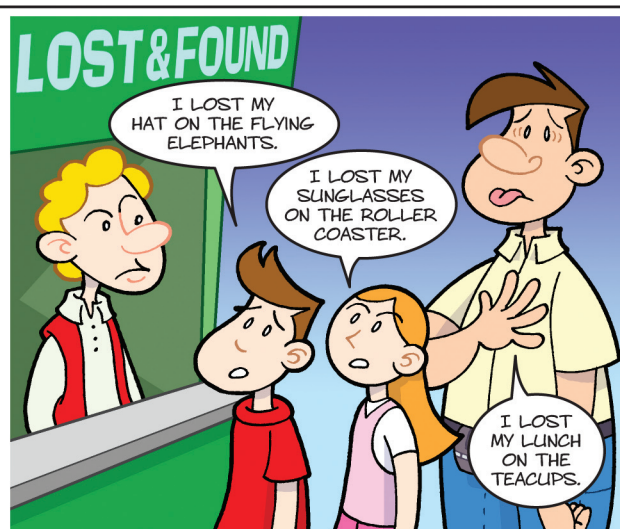
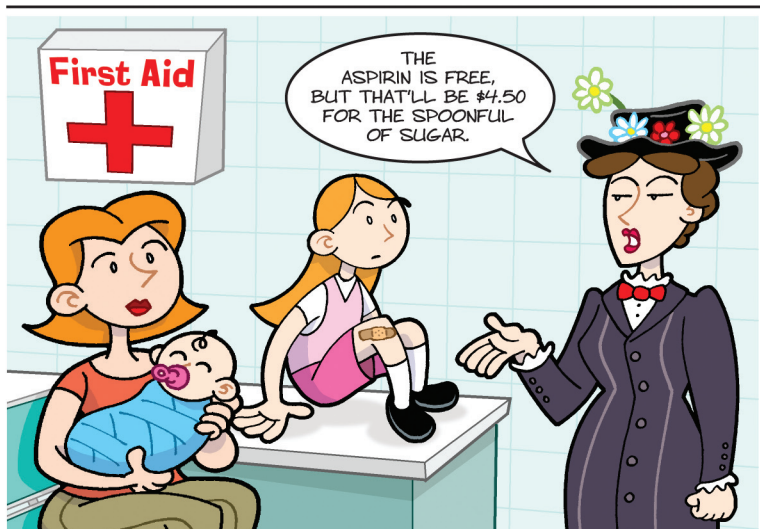
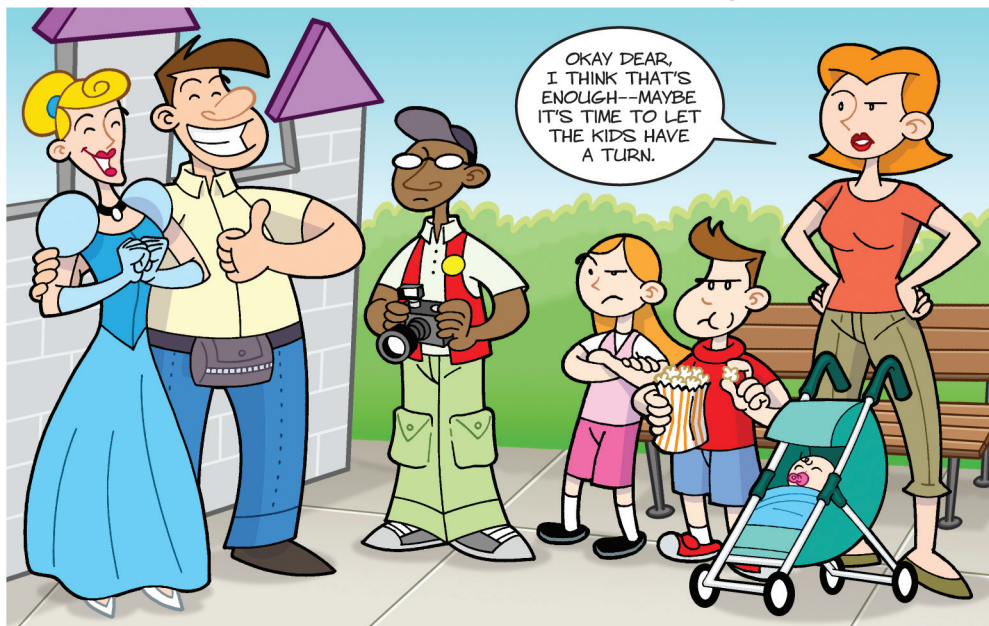
Ultimately, if you're heading to Central Florida for your next convention or vacation, you might consider coloring your schedule a little bit blue. You'll certainly see something unlike anything else in all of Orlando. •••••



Photos courtesy of Universal Orlando.

AMUSEMENT PARK

by John Green
& Pat Lewis



To learn more about our comic family, The Musers, head to attractionsmagazine.com.

PUZZLES

Can you figure them all out?

SPOT the DIFFERENCE

Can you find all 7 differences in these two pictures?



WORD SEARCH

Answers are all related to water parks.

Words can be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and backwards.

D	B	R	B	H	I	W	A	W	H
R	R	W	C	S	W	A	V	E	S
W	E	A	Q	U	A	T	I	C	A
E	E	T	Z	R	I	E	N	R	L
B	Z	L	A	Z	E	R	I	U	P
U	E	A	A	W	I	V	K	W	S
T	T	G	I	Z	S	L	I	D	E
N	O	O	H	P	Y	T	B	R	S
T	W	O	W	A	L	S	A	N	D
V	E	N	S	E	K	F	R	U	S
D	L	I	W	I	T	L	O	O	P

Aquatica
Beach
Bikini
Blizzard
Breeze
Lagoon
Lazy
Pool

Raft
River
Sand
Ski
Slide
Splash
Sun
Surf

Towel
Tube
Typhoon
Water
Wave
Wet
Wild

MYSTERY PHOTO



WIN A PRIZE!

Tell us where this photo was taken and you could win an **Attractions** t-shirt! E-mail your answer to mystery@attractionsmagazine.com

Hint: Look up but don't get too wound up thinking about this Walt Disney World Downtown Disney location.

The deadline for entries is Apr. 30, 2008. One answer allowed per person, per issue. Please include your name, mailing address and telephone number with your answer. Everyone who submits the correct location will go into a drawing. One person, randomly selected from all correct entries, will win a prize. We reserve the right to publish the names of all who submit the correct location. One winner per household allowed every six months.

Stumped? Need to check to see if you're right? You can find all of the answers on the next page!

Disaster! Opens at Universal Orlando

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson was on-hand to experience the new update to Earthquake.

In our last issue, we dished out the details on what to expect in Universal Studios Orlando's anticipated update to their Earthquake attraction. Now, the attraction has opened to great success, entertaining guests with a mix of comedy, action, and incredible new technology.

The grand opening ceremony was held on Jan. 17 just outside the attraction, and was open to let park guests watch and enjoy the occasion with the media, executives, and celebrity guests.

The biggest surprise to park guests came when Universal Orlando Resort

President and COO Bill Davis introduced Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson who came out from behind an exploding wall and told the crowd about his excitement in being involved in the attraction.

After the ceremony concluded, "The Rock" had his first chance to enjoy the ride and guests were later invited to experience Disaster! first-hand.

While the ride portion of the attraction is essentially the same as it was when it was called Earthquake, the new pre-show and post-ride video make it enjoyable enough to ride again and again.



Ka-BOOM!

Disaster! kicked off with a big bang just outside the attraction's entrance as Universal Orlando Resort President Bill Davis, with help from a family of park guests, pressed down on the ignition lever.

The Rock says...

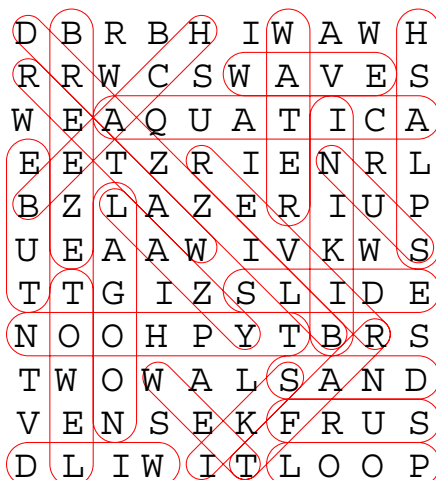
Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's role in Disaster! is as the star of a "trailer" for a fictional film entitled, *Mutha Nature*, shown to guests just after the ride. On opening day, Johnson discussed having his first chance to see himself as part of a theme park attraction, "I loved the ride. It was great. I had never seen any of the footage, nor had I ridden it in any of the soft openings that we've had or anything like that. It was the very first time I rode it and I think it was great."

Some may find the trailer to be corny, but that's not a bad thing according to Johnson, "It was great to see the trailer at the end. Especially, you know, the way we shot it was fairly over-the-top in terms of the acting to make it funny. The parts where the audience is interactive is really tremendous."



PUZZLE ANSWERS

WORD SEARCH



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



LAST ISSUE'S MYSTERY PHOTO



SEAWORLD'S STING RAY LAGOON

Congratulations to **Debbie Barker** from **Teversham, Cambridge, UK**, winner of an **Attractions** t-shirt!



Attraction News from Outside the Orlando Area

By Andy Guinigundo

Innoventions Dream Home to Open



A 1959 photograph of Disneyland's Monsanto "House of the Future."

Anaheim, Calif. – In February, Disneyland announced a partnership with Microsoft, HP, Life/ware, and home builder Taylor Morrison to create the "Innoventions Dream Home" in Tomorrowland. The fictional home will feature integrated digital technologies of today and into the future. Disney hopes the new Dream Home will continue the tradition of describing that "great big beautiful tomorrow."

\$20 Million in Legos



Carlsbad, Calif. – In January, Legoland California announced details of its \$20 million expansion. With a planned opening of March 10, Legoland will debut the Land of Adventure. Made to look like 1920s Egypt, attractions will take guests on jeep tours through ancient Lego ruins. Pharaoh's Revenge allows children and parents to shoot thousands of foam balls at each other. A second phase of the development will be Sea Life aquarium that is planned for summer.

Coaster Honors Knievel Legend

St. Louis, Mo. – 2007 saw the passing of legendary daredevil Evel Kniewel. Before his death, he collaborated on a roller coaster that will bear his name at Six Flags. The eight-story wooden coaster will feature a 90-degree left turn and 16 hills. The late Kniewel said of the ride, "I've been thrilling people all my life with death-defying stunts ... what better way to create a new generation of Evel Kniewel fans than by partnering with Six Flags for this exciting attraction?"

Prices Fixed at Cedar Point

Sandusky, Ohio – As the prices at Orlando parks seem to rise each year, Cedar Point amusement park has chosen to keep their ticket price fixed at \$43 for a single day according to the Toledo Blade newspaper. This is in contrast to Cedar Point's interesting mid-season ticket increase from \$42 to \$43 in 2007. Analysts believe this price freeze is a recession-proofing maneuver.

"Paramount" Tag Goes Away



The Former Italian Job Coaster turned Backlot Stunt Coaster.

Sandusky, Ohio – Cedar Fair, the parent company of Cedar Point in Ohio, acquired the entire family of seven Paramount amusement and water parks in 2006. As the 2008 season approaches, the "Paramount" title along with any Paramount movie references are being eliminated. For example, Paramount's Kings Island near Cincinnati becomes just Kings Island, and Paramount Canada's Wonderland in Ontario becomes Canada's Wonderland. Some of the rides get the name-change treatment also. Top Gun is now Flight Deck. The Italian Job Coaster becomes Backlot Stunt Coaster.

Six Flags Over Texas to Sell Alcohol?

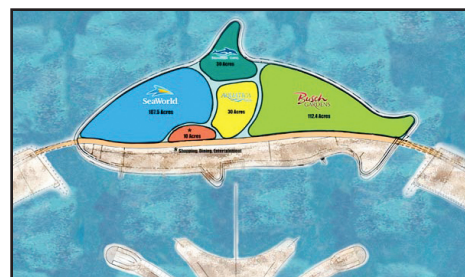
Arlington, Texas – Six Flags Over Texas filed for a permit that could have them serving alcohol as soon as March. Alcohol

in amusement parks is not all that uncommon with EPCOT hosting a yearly wine festival and SeaWorld Orlando serving up free Anheuser-Busch samples in their Hospitality Center. However, days after the filing, more than 600 phone calls flooded the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission in protest of the permit. Despite this vocal opposition, only one legal protest had been logged at the time. Other Texas parks, including Six Flags Fiesta Texas and SeaWorld, both in San Antonio, have alcohol permits.

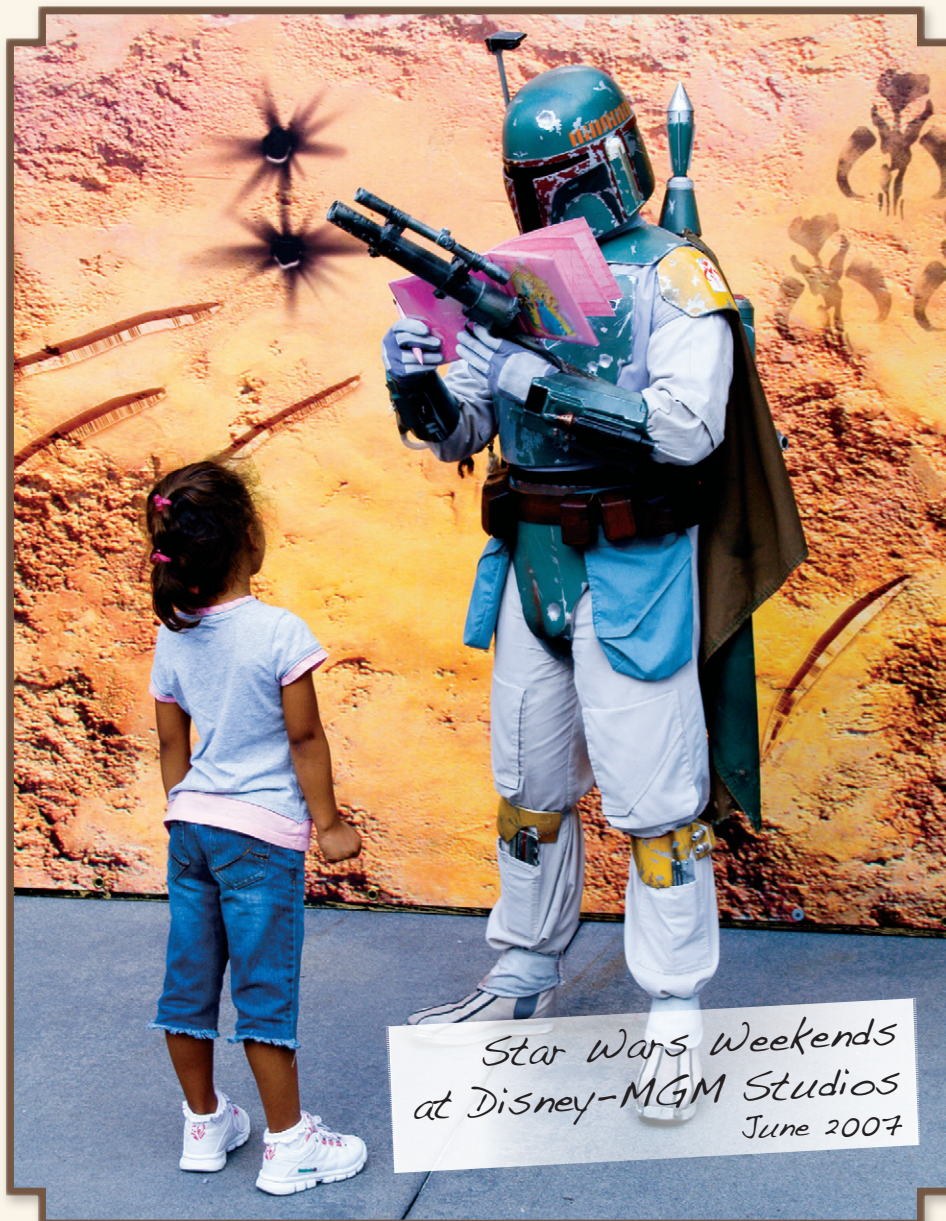
Hershey Park's Fahrenheit Roller Coaster Set to Debut

Hershey, Penn. – The upcoming launch of Fahrenheit will mark Hershey Park's 11th coaster. It is a steel track coaster that will boast, among other things, an inverted loop, an inverted corkscrew roll, and an inverted S-roll. The show-stopper is the 90-degree initial ascent followed by the steepest descent in the United States – 97 degrees negative drop. See a computerized demonstration of the action at www.HersheyPark.com.

Busch Parks Coming to Dubai



Dubai – SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, Discovery Cove and Aquatica will soon have a home on a whale-shaped island located on "the Crown" of The Palm Jebel Ali in Dubai. Busch and Nakheel, a key company in Dubai's transformation into one of the fastest growing cities in the world, reached agreement earlier this month on the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding that calls for the phased construction of four theme parks on the second of the company's three Palm man-made island developments. Nakheel will invest the necessary capital to build and operate the parks. Busch will license its brands to Nakheel and operate the parks under a management contract. Preliminary design work and site planning is underway, with the first phase expected to open in 2012.



Big bad Star Wars bounty hunter Boba Fett doesn't look quite as mean when signing a pink Disney Princess autograph book. Perhaps Fett had Sleeping Beauty in mind when he had Han Solo sealed in carbonite. Boba Fett and many other Star Wars characters were available for autographs and photos at last year's Star Wars Weekends at Disney-MGM Studios – even obliging those with “girly” autograph books. Who knew bounty hunters had such a soft spot?

Star Wars Weekends takes place each Friday, Saturday and Sunday during June this year at the same park, now-renamed Disney's Hollywood Studios.

Got a photo from Orlando that tells a story?

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